



MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission
Thursday, February 15, 2007
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Warren Plante, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Marc Usem,

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Hilah Almog, Steve Brown

STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Houle, Jack Sullivan, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by chair Wanninger. Thorpe was nominated by Plante to serve as co-chair and seconded by White. All voted aye.

II. Public Comment

None

III. Old Business

a. York Place – West 69th Street and York Avenue: Project Re-submittal

Houle said the traffic study and plans were reviewed two months ago and minor changes were made such as switching the entry to the high rise to come off Xerxes Avenue instead of W. 69th Street and the retail entrance off W. 69th Street. Houle said traffic impacts have decreased substantially and staff recommends approval of the revised plans. The project's traffic consultant was not in attendance, but the City's consultant, Chuck Rickart with WSB was in attendance.

Discussion centered on the following points:

- A sidewalk to promote walking from the residential complex to Walgreens should be a condition for approval;
- Safety concerns with traffic backing up at the stoplight on Saturdays when Cub Foods parking lot is at capacity;
- Potential for Xerxes to become more congested due to car dealer's employees' on-street parking; the general area becoming congested like 50th & France;
- Using redevelopments as an opportunity to make changes and looking at the impacts on a broader scale;
- Properties with only one access point;
- Stacking lanes was a condition of approval when traffic study was first reviewed;
- Trip generation on Saturdays seems low (data is showing peak hours only);
- Study shows everyone exiting Xerxes going north (this is based on current traffic pattern);

Houle said the simulation model being developed will help to show the impact of a redevelopment on a broader scale. He also said according to a Traffic Management Plan to be developed by Best Buy, a certain percentage of their employees would take public transportation which will help to minimize congestion.

Thorpe moved to accept the resubmitted plans and traffic study subject to a sidewalk being built (staff and developer to determine best location) so that residents can walk to Walgreens and other businesses, and that the stacking lanes on York Avenue and West 69th Street be fixed (a condition attached to the first approval). The motion was seconded by Usem. All voted aye. Motion carried.

b. NE Edina Traffic Study Implementation Plan

Houle said due to cost, implementation of the NE Edina Traffic Study improvements will be spread out over 3-4 years. Implementation schedule is as follows:

2007 Arterial Improvements

- Vernon Avenue and Interlachen Blvd
- 50th Street & Halifax Avenue
- 50th Street & France Avenue

2008 Arterial and Local Neighborhood Improvements

- 44th Street & France Avenue
- Country Club Area – Phase 1

2009 Collector and Local Neighborhood Improvements

- 44th Street (or could be done in 2010 with the West 44th Street project)
- Country Club Area – Phase 2

2010 Local Neighborhood Improvements

- Morningside Area and White Oaks Area
- Country Club Area – Phase 3

Wanninger asked about the business area parking study and the public relations campaign. Houle said staff is initiating a study for the parking ramps in March and at that time he will contact the City of Minneapolis regarding the business area parking study. Regarding the public relations campaign, Houle said staff will develop a plan within the next two months.

c. West 70th Street Corridor Study Update

Wanninger said he is still looking for someone west of Highway 100 to serve on the Study Advisory Committee (SAC); otherwise, there are good representations which will result in good input. Plante suggested having someone from the Southdale area. Wanninger will continue to work on identifying a resident west of Highway 100 and from the Southdale Shopping Center. The first SAC meeting was scheduled for April 12, 7-9 p.m., location to be determined.

Houle suggested that they wait until the SAC meeting to learn about the State Aid policy for W. 70th so that everyone can be informed at the same time. Wanninger asked that other policies such as sidewalk, crosswalk, stop signs, etc. also be included as this will help the new members to understand appropriate placement and use of such traffic measurements.

Wanninger noted that the last of the three public hearings is scheduled for February 22. He asked if there is a need for a 4th public hearing. Plante recommended discussing the need for a 4th public hearing at the conclusion of the 3rd. Wanninger said they will probably need to have a meeting with the business district similarly to the NE Edina Traffic Study 50th & France Business Representatives meeting. He requested that residents' comments be summarized into common issues with the biggest issues listed first.

IV. New Business

a. Traffic Impact Statement

Sullivan said the current Traffic Initiation and Review Policy does not cover all the requirements that staff asked of traffic consultants when they are considering conducting a traffic study relative to redevelopments and therefore, staff is recommending a revision of the current policy. A more detailed policy will also help to reduce the amount of time staff spends on the phone with traffic consultants.

Sullivan said the revised policy would include a name change to Transportation Impact Analysis to reflect incorporation of new components which include pedestrian movements, alternative transportation methods, etc. Sullivan stated that a Transportation Impact Analysis is a study that assesses the effects that a development's traffic will have on the transportation network. He said if the ETC is in agreement, staff will work with the City's traffic consultant to develop the revised policy.

A consensus was reached by the ETC for staff to revise the Traffic Initiation and Review Policy.

b. Neighborhood Improvement Projects

Houle said three neighborhoods are scheduled for reconstruction this summer. They are: Southdale First Addition and Woodhill; Concord Avenue (South View Lane to Valley View Road); and Todd Park. Some areas will include bump outs, entry treatments, realigned intersections, crosswalks, parking bays, narrowing of roadway, etc.

Wanninger said he's observed that drivers tend to speed up at the pedestrian signal at Valley View Road and Concord Avenue and asked if there is anything that can be done on Valley View Road to change drivers' behavior. Houle said he will look into this separate from the project.

Thorpe said the traffic calming measures is consistent with the ETC's vision. She would like to ensure that the roadways are bike-friendly. Houle said the Bike Task Force is developing a bike plan for the City.

V. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting of December 21, 2006

The following correction was made: p. 3, second paragraph from the bottom – change 50th Avenue to 50th Street. White moved to approve the corrected minutes of December 21, 2006, and the motion was seconded by Plante. All voted aye. Motion carried.

b. Special Meeting of January 18, 2007

Plante moved to approve the minutes of January 18, 2007, and the motion was seconded by White. All voted aye. Motion carried.

c. Special Meeting of January 23, 2007

Plante moved to approve the minutes of January 23, 2007, and the motion was seconded by Thorpe. All voted aye. Motion carried.

VI. Planning Commission Update

No update.

VII. Open Discussion

a. Transportation Comprehensive Plan Update

Houle said WSB was hired to do the Comprehensive Plan update. He said they were chosen primarily because of the north/southeast Edina Synchro Network Model layout. Rickart of WSB said the Synchro Network, in conjunction with land use data, will be used to look at whole or ultimate build of the area and it will identify problem intersections. He said the model will not give solutions but it will show the outcome of various solution scenarios.

Houle said City of Bloomington has contacted him regarding a joint study along Highway 494 (to be paid for by Bloomington). He said both cities will be able to use their Synchro Network to better manage traffic flow from one city to the next.

Wanninger said during the NE Edina Traffic Study planning, they talked about meeting with their legislative representatives to discuss funding of a pilot project. Houle said the League of MN Cities recently hosted a meeting with Mn/DOT that also included himself and the city engineer for the City of St. Paul to discuss dropping the speed limit from 30 to 25 mph in urban residential areas. He said Mn/DOT's speed limit and traffic engineers have agreed to meet with him and St. Paul for further discussion.

Wanninger said he recalls a sidewalk plan that was presented to them for approval and funding recommendations. Houle said pedestrian movement is included in the Comp Plan and it will be brought back to the ETC in approximately six months.

Plante asked about the high school area. Houle said they are short on State Aid funds because of the number of projects planned. He said some projects are being pushed back to later years, but he is going to look at a modified plan for the high school area because of safety.

Wanninger said notification was received saying that Mn/DOT is not ready with their plans yet but is still pursuing the full build of Highway 100.

Crosstown is scheduled for this summer but they are still experiencing funding problems. Houle suggested getting an update from Mn/DOT at the next ETC meeting.

Mr. Robert Shotwell, City of Richfield resident and member of their Transportation Commission, was asked if there are any issues that Richfield has as a neighbor of Edina that they are working through with their Council. Mr. Shotwell said he is not aware of any issues.

Meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2007, 6-8 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.